

**To:** Germann, Sandy[Germann.Sandy@epa.gov]; Russo, Rebecca[Russo.Rebecca@epa.gov]; EOC Public Information[EOC\_Public\_Information@epa.gov]  
**From:** Grantham, Nancy  
**Sent:** Thur 8/27/2015 8:21:32 PM  
**Subject:** FW: Udall Welcomes Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Announcement of Oversight Hearing on Gold King Mine Disaster's Impact on Indian Country

**From:** Gray, David  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2015 4:17 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Thomas; Fritz, Matthew; Grantham, Nancy  
**Subject:** FW: Udall Welcomes Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Announcement of Oversight Hearing on Gold King Mine Disaster's Impact on Indian Country

**From:** Curley, Calvert (Tom Udall) [[mailto:Calvert\\_Curley@tomudall.senate.gov](mailto:Calvert_Curley@tomudall.senate.gov)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2015 3:16 PM  
**Subject:** Udall Welcomes Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Announcement of Oversight Hearing on Gold King Mine Disaster's Impact on Indian Country

FYI -

Cal Curley

Field Representative

U.S. Senator Tom Udall (NM)



**For Immediate Release**

**August 27, 2015**

**Contact:** Jennifer Talhelm

202.228.6870 | [news@tomudall.senate.gov](mailto:news@tomudall.senate.gov) | [@TomUdallPress](https://twitter.com/TomUdallPress)

**Udall Welcomes Senate Committee on Indian Affairs  
Announcement of Oversight Hearing on  
Gold King Mine Disaster's Impact on Indian Country**

**WASHINGTON** - Today, U.S. Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) welcomed an announcement by U.S. Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (SCIA), that the committee will hold an oversight hearing to examine the harmful impacts of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Gold King Mine spill on Indian Country. Udall and fellow committee member Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) wrote a letter earlier this month to Barrasso and SCIA Vice Chairman Jon Tester (D-Mont.) requesting the hearing.

The hearing, titled "EPA's Gold King Mine Disaster: Examining the Harmful Impacts to Indian Country," will take place at 2:15 p.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 in the SCIA hearing room, 628 Senate Dirksen Office Building. The hearing will provide an opportunity for committee members to demand answers from the EPA regarding the impact of the Gold King Mine disaster on Indian Country.

"I'm grateful for Chairman Barrasso and Vice Chairman Tester's responsiveness in pursuing a Senate Indian Affairs Committee oversight hearing on the impact of the EPA Gold King Mine Spill on the Navajo Nation," **Udall said**. "Through my continued discussions with Navajo Nation leaders, I understand their

dissatisfaction over EPA's response, and I share their concerns about the uncertainty of long-term contamination of land and water by the toxic mine drainage that was released. Congress has a responsibility to oversee the federal government's response to this crisis, and the upcoming committee hearing will help ensure that EPA addresses the public health, environmental and economic costs of the spill. I look forward to working with the Navajo Nation on the recovery from this disaster and other important long-term efforts like the cleanup of abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation."

"The EPA must be held accountable for the release of contaminated and toxic waste water into the Animas River in Colorado and the San Juan River in New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah," **Barrasso said**. "Tribes use the waters from these rivers and this hearing will be a good chance to hear firsthand how this disaster is impacting them. The EPA needs to work with these tribes to ensure the mess is cleaned up, the sovereignty of the tribes is respected, and that the concerns of the tribes are acted on."

"Water is our most valuable resource and we must do everything we can to protect it for future generations," **Tester said**. "I hope this hearing will help bring about solutions so we can clean up the land and water for Navajo Nation and all the folks impacted by this disaster."

"I thank Chairman Barrasso and Vice Chairman Tester for agreeing to hold this oversight hearing on the impact of the EPA Gold King Mine spill on the Navajo Nation," **McCain said**. "I share serious concerns expressed by members of the Navajo Nation about the EPA's response to this spill, and about the potential for toxic substances to flow onto the reservation's lands and waters. Through this hearing, Congress will make sure that the EPA explains the public health, environmental, and economic costs of the spill, and its remediation plans, as well as addresses other problematic EPA activities involving the Navajo Nation."

On August 5, 2015, a crew supervised by the EPA at the Gold King Mine in Colorado released three million gallons of wastewater into Cement Creek, which flows into the Animas River in Colorado and then to the San Juan River in New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. The San Juan River crosses the reservations of both the Navajo Nation and Southern Ute Indian Tribe. The contaminated water contained heavy metals such as lead and arsenic.

###